



**Thorn Valley**

# Commercial Driver

**VEHICLE INSPECTION**



# **BRAKES, FLUID LEAKS**

# Brakes, Fluid Leaks

While the law does not require a driver to crawl under the vehicle to check for violations, discovering visible defects such as cracked springs and frames or visible brake defects including push rod travel in excess of 90 degrees are within the expectations of a thorough driver inspection.

Inadequate or cursory vehicle inspections may fail to detect common safety defects – for example fluid leaks. Even many good drivers fail to detect fluid leaks while doing a vehicle inspection. In addition to checking the truck components listed previously, the driver should conduct a visual check around and underneath while approaching the vehicle and throughout the entire circle inspection. This includes not just at pre/post trip inspection time, but each time the driver approaches the vehicle in preparation for driving. Leaking fluids or other critical issues should be identified and corrected before continuing.



# LIGHTS, SIGNALS, REFLECTORS

# Lights, Signals, Reflectors

Thorough pre-trip and maintenance inspection procedures must be documented, and all personnel must understand and adhere to them. Periodic shop or other management participation in the pre and post trip inspection process is highly recommended.

Refer to the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) website for detailed inspection procedures >  
<https://cvsa.org/inspections/inspections>

- At minimum, safety checks must ensure that lights, signals, reflectors, conspicuity tape, brakes, tires, wheels/rims, steering, horn, wipers, mirrors, coupling devices and emergency equipment are present, are in good condition and operate properly.
- As the driver performs the safety inspection, they should take a rag with them and wipe down the conspicuity tape, reflectors, and lights. This helps other motorists see and react properly to their vehicle. Drive Defensively - “Communicating with Other Motorists”.



# DRIVER TIRE INSPECTION

# Driver Tire Inspection

Besides fuel expense, tire maintenance is typically the number one cost associated with commercial fleet operations. Improper mounting, inflation or defective tires can also lead to serious collisions. This is why tire violations carry a CSA BASIC severity weight of 8 for commercial motor carriers and drivers.

Improper tire inflation affects all areas of the organization – not just safety. Maintenance, fuel consumption, and ultimately customer service, productivity and profitability are all affected by an inadequate tire program.

# Driver Tire Inspection

Truck tires with less than 90% of the recommended tire pressure are considered “flat”. “Run-flat” tires must be removed and inspected for damage by a qualified tire technician before proceeding. It is not possible to detect a 10% under-inflated tire by simply “thumping it”.

Professional drivers will use a tire gauge to check for proper tire inflation. If the vehicle is equipped with a tire-pressure monitoring system (TPMS), they learn and understand how to interpret the data output.





# ROADSIDE INSPECTIONS

# Roadside Inspections

Failure to detect critical vehicle defects is a symptom of inadequate maintenance management controls and can result in a vehicle being placed Out of Service.

Out of Service violations add an additional 2 points to the BASIC severity levels. Violating Out of Service orders carries the highest possible BASIC violation severity weight of 10.





# TRIP PREPARATION

# Trip preparation

Throughout the trip, road vibration and the elements may loosen and weaken components. Minor vehicle defects become even more extreme during winter weather conditions. So be sure coolant levels and other mechanical components such as the heater, defroster and engine block heater remain functioning throughout the winter by conducting more frequent vehicle inspections.

Collisions caused by mechanical failure are PREVENTABLE if the defect was known or should have been known had the driver or technician followed standard vehicle inspection procedures.



**FINAL DEPARTURE**

# Final Departure

## Check point

- (True or False?)
- The driver has direct control over two of the most costly items in a fleet operation - Tires and Fuel.